

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 07 ANKARA 002076

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/11/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ECON](#) [MARR](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR TURKISH MFA U/S TUYGAN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch, E.O. 12958, reasons, 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Turkish MFA U/S Tuygan comes to Washington with the GOT continuing to talk about a strategic partnership but with bilateral relations troubled by an absence of clarity on Turkish direction and intent. Ruling AKP officials publicly deny any bilateral problems or blame them on U.S. policies. Aside from the Turkish General Staff leadership, few Turkish officials publicly defend the relationship with vigor or consistency, and rivalry between PM Erdogan and FM Gul, and their distance from State institutions, hampers our ability to get our points across or elicit a coherent, timely response. Nevertheless, Turkey remains important to many U.S. initiatives. Tuygan needs to hear clearly what Turkey should do to help relations grow instead of falter.

2. (C) The GOT is now working more in parallel with U.S. interests in Iraq, but serious tensions remain, particularly over the PKK. The Turks must decide how to continue their valuable help in Afghanistan. Turkey's objections to Cyprus' participation in NATO/EU consultations absent fulfillment of EU commitments to Turkish Cypriots blocks progress on NATO/EU cooperation. Turkey's EU drive has lost momentum and the Religious Affairs Directorate's anti-missionary campaign has raised the profile of religious tolerance issues. The GOT continues to resist our efforts to break the stalemate in Turkish/Armenian relations. The Turks are partners in BMENAI but have been unhelpful on Lebanon/Syria. Both we and the Turks want to continue high-level economic contacts and to work out serious bilateral trade problems. While anti-terrorism cooperation remains active, Ankara needs to move more on blocking terrorist finances and preventing human trafficking. End Summary.

Turkey's Drift

3. (C) Tuygan's visit comes as the AKP government, although still widely popular and without a viable political alternative, is showing itself incapable of sustaining good governance or domestic reform. The government seems unwilling to confront a resurgence of intolerant nationalist sentiments. In foreign policy, although Erdogan and Gul claim to seek good ties with the U.S. and membership in the EU, they don't seem to know how to get there.

4. (C) Clinging to a narrow circle of ill-informed advisors, Erdogan continues to base his governing style on (by now formulaic) charisma and constant foreign travel rather than on ensuring effective coordination between his Cabinet and parliamentary group. Moreover, he has not built working relations with core institutions of the State (armed forces, National Intelligence Organization, judiciary, bureaucracy), which -- despite a lower public profile -- remain highly influential and highly wary of AKP. He appears to understand that Gul is working to undermine him, but hasn't chosen to take Gul on in either domestic or foreign policy arenas.

US-Turkey Relations

5. (C) Successful elections in Iraq and Secretary Rice's early February visit slowed growth of anti-Americanism in Turkey. The MFA appears to favor energizing the relationship but has come forward with little beyond suggesting more frequent high level visits. Moreover, the MFA's influence on Erdogan and Gul is held in check owing to Erdogan's distrust of the bureaucracy and Gul's apparent metering of the flow of information from the MFA to the Prime Minister. Although Erdogan (grudgingly) and Gul (unevenly) have spoken up in support of the relationship from time to time, the GOT must do much more to help restore public confidence in bilateral relations. The reminder that alliances between democracies require public support has been useful in getting the GOT to start weighing in with public opinion, but the GOT needs to do much more to give political impetus to the relationship.

Dealing with the PKK

6. (S) Turkish government and military leaders understand that responsibility for dealing with terrorists within Iraq's borders will increasingly pass to the Iraqis. In hosting the

January 2005 trilateral PKK talks, the Turks signaled their willingness to work together with the Iraqis on this shared problem. Still, they, and the public at large, remain bitter over their perception that the U.S. has taken no steps in Iraq to fulfill our consistent pledge that that country will no longer be a base for terrorist operations against Turkey and they expect the U.S. to remain engaged in the effort. Some Turks, including some in the military, harbor the belief that the U.S. acquiesces to (or supports) the PKK's presence in Iraq and they continually cite unsubstantiated reports of U.S./PKK meetings. Public attention may re-focus on the PKK in the wake of a recently-begun Turkish operation aimed at a reported 1500 PKK militants in southeastern Turkey's Cudi Mountain. The Turks believe PKK operatives there are preparing for a major Spring offensive. In an April 7 speech to the War Academies President Sezer reiterated that it is time for the U.S. to take action.

17. (C) The trilateral talks remain a focus, with the U.S. role more one of facilitator. The Turks and Iraqis should outline concrete steps to pave the way for actions against the PKK, including establishing an intelligence-sharing mechanism, and holding a legal experts meeting after the ITG is in place, discussing issues related to closure of PKK front offices and media outlets in northern Iraq and handling of known PKK terrorists who are arrested. MNF-I is in the process of disseminating a list of PKK leaders to units in the field that will allow them to detain those individuals when they come into our custody. This is a small but an important step by MNF-I and, once executed, should be appreciated by the Turks. However, the Turks will not be satisfied if we defer more to the Iraqis, and will pocket measures taken and ask for more.

Incirlik Cargo Hub

18. (S) U.S. Transportation Command Commander GEN Handy was in Ankara on April 11. Although Handy did not see Tuygan, DCHOD GEN Basbug raised our long-standing request for a logistics hub at Incirlik to support OEF and OIF and said TGS supports our request. We understand TGS and MFA have been working with ministers on this proposal recently. For the past several months we have refrained from talking about the hub request in order not to feed existent and very misplaced expectations in some parts of the Turkish government and bureaucracy that Turkey can get something from us in exchange. Fed misleading views by some in the GOT, Turkish media have asserted the U.S. administration is using the threat of a Congressional Armenian genocide resolution to force a positive Turkish answer on the hub request.

EU Accession and Reform Efforts

19. (C) Despite GOT denials, Turkey's EU drive has lost momentum since the EU in December set a date to open accession talks. PM Erdogan has yet to name a lead EU negotiator and, contrary to Gul's and others' assertions, the GOT has made little progress in organizing the bureaucracy to prepare for the process of adopting the 80,000-page EU aquis. The EU, for its part, has also delayed certain steps related to Turkey's candidacy, largely to avoid influencing the upcoming French referendum on the EU constitution.

110. (C) EU Troika representatives were disappointed to discover during their March visit to Turkey that the GOT has developed no plans for further human rights reforms. The Troika visit was overshadowed by the violent March 6 police crackdown on International Women's Day demonstrators in Istanbul. PM Erdogan and other GOT leaders disgusted the EU by reacting aggressively and in an anti-foreign mode when asked about the Istanbul incident, with repeated public statements implying that police were not to blame.

111. (C) The GOT's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) recently launched a campaign to counter the "threat" of missionaries in Turkey. The Diyanet wrote and distributed a sermon delivered in mosques across the country March 11 equating missionaries in Turkey today with the Crusaders of centuries past. State Minister Aydin, who oversees the Diyanet, and Interior Minister Aksu responded recently issued written statements with even worse language. Aydin called missionary activities "separatist and destructive" and implied they are part of a campaign by foreign governments to create divisions in Turkish society. We have seen a recent up-tick in threats and harassment of Christians in Turkey.

112. (C) The Turkish Parliament voted March 31 to delay implementation of the new Penal Code until June 1 -- the legislation was scheduled to take effect April 1 -- to allow time to make amendments, especially concerning press freedom. MPs have not yet prepared the list of proposed amendments. The delay also provides an opportunity for Parliament to eliminate controversial language in the "reasoning" attached to Article 305, which states that persons could be convicted

for accepting payment from foreign sources for the purpose of conducting propaganda in favor of withdrawing troops from Cyprus or "saying that Armenians were subject to a genocide at the end of World War I."

Greece/Aegean

13. (C) Turkish military flights over the Aegean have returned to 2003 levels. The Turks flew significantly fewer sorties than normal in 2004 due to the Cyprus negotiations, the Athens Olympics, and the runup to the December EU Summit. Tuygan will likely express annoyance at public Greek complaints and recite the (correct) Turkish arguments that Greek complaints about "FIR infringements" are baseless, since ICAO rules exempt national flights from any notification requirement; that Athens never reciprocated the steps Turkey took in 2003 (reducing flights and reducing the weapons their planes carry when flying in the Aegean); and that Athens' 10 NM territorial air claim is inconsistent with international law. The Turks and the Greeks recently agreed on a series of CBMs, although none directly connected to the Aegean, and political engagement moves forward with exchanges of ministerial visits accelerating.

Iraq

14. (C) Reflecting a reluctant but step-by-step evolution in GOT thinking in the wake of Iraq's January elections, Tuygan is generally supportive of U.S. efforts to build Iraq's democratic future. He will say that Turkey's goals for Iraq are the same as ours. At the same time, he will be conscious of Turkish public opinion, which is overwhelmingly negative toward U.S. intervention in Iraq and our approach to the Middle East. Tuygan will point out that, despite this negative public opinion, Turkey has provided assistance: its offer to send peacekeepers in 2003, use of Incirlik Air Base tankers to refuel aircraft on support missions for both Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and transit (via Habur gate) of supplies for our forces and humanitarian goods. Turkey is active in reconstruction efforts, including providing electricity for Iraq, and training in Turkey of Iraqi diplomats, Sunni political groups and, as its main contribution to the NATO training mission, Iraqi security forces. So far the Iraqis have turned down Turkish offers to train Iraqi officers in Turkey under NTM-I. Turkey could consider sending significantly more Turkish trainers to Iraq, which appears to be the Iraqis' preference, but there seems to be little appetite in Ankara.

15. (C) While we believe Tuygan has helped influence the GOT's generally more positive approach to Iraq since January 30 elections there, he is likely to refer to concerns which have long been a part of the GOT's approach: Turkish frustration and anger over a perceived lack of U.S. action against the PKK in northern Iraq, Kurdish separatism and designs on Kirkuk, treatment of the Iraqi Turkmen population, and attacks against Turkish truck drivers.

Caucasus: Georgia

16. (C) Although the Turks participate in training Georgian security forces, Ankara stays closely attuned to Russian views and has not gone much beyond pro forma expressions of support for Georgia's sovereignty and independence. Turkey was slow to understand and accept the Rose Revolution and there are still many in the government who see Georgia's 2003 change as merely part of a regions-wide plan orchestrated by Soros and the USG. On Abkhazia and South Ossetia Turkey does not display an active diplomacy except to urge the end to the blockade of Abkhazia. On Ajara the Turks remained supportive of Abashidze until the last minute and facilitated Russian emissaries' arrival in Batumi.

Caucasus: Azerbaijan

17. (C) Seeing the Minsk process as going nowhere, Turkey remains publicly committed to supporting Azerbaijani demands for a return of the territories occupied by Armenia and at various times has linked development of bilateral relations with Armenia to resolution of, or significant progress on, N-K. However, Turkey appears less committed to Ilhan Aliyev than it was earlier to Haydar.

Caucasus: Armenia

18. (C) Turkish/Armenian relations are stalemated not only by Armenian refusal to issue a clear acceptance of Turkish territorial integrity and the border, but also by Turkish insistence on linking improvements to Armenian concessions on occupied Azeri territory. There are no official diplomatic

relations; the border remains closed. The last bilateral meetings were in the fall of 2004 and, even then, the meetings were making no progress. Indirect bilateral trade (via Georgia) and very modest people-to-people contacts continue. Armenia would materially help a breakthrough by explicit recognition of the Turkey/Armenia border.

19. (C) Public debate on the Armenian genocide question has become substantially more open. Nevertheless, Turkey's Parliament recently began a public campaign to "prove" Turkey did not commit genocide through proposed "scientific, historical" research by Turkish and Armenian scholars. Over the past year, the MFA has turned a deaf ear to our advice that improvements in Turkish/Armenian relations are the best way Turkey could help itself on this score.

Central Asia -----

20. (C) Turkey's aims remain at the scaled-back level which they fell to after an initial post-1991 rush of expectation that Central Asia would embrace Turkic solidarity. Ankara finds Karimov and Niyazov difficult to deal with and relations with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are flat; educational exchange and some business investment motivate relations with Kazakhstan. Turkey was initially hesitant to accept change in Kyrgyzstan as coming from the aspirations of the Kyrgyz. Some, such as Prime Ministry foreign policy advisor and Gul associate Ahmet Davutoglu, see "Eurasian" cooperation with Russia as the way to reestablish a dynamic Turkish presence in Central Asia. On an unofficial level, the Islamist lodge of Fethullah Gulen continues to run schools in Central Asia.

Russia -----

21. (C) With trade (heavily in Russia's favor owing to massive natural gas exports to Turkey) and tourism (two million Russians expected in 2005) booming, the GOT sees Russia as a promising partner. So far Erdogan does not seem to have accepted Putin's invitation -- expressed in Ankara in December and Moscow in January -- for a Russo-Turkish strategic partnership as an alternative to the U.S. and EU. The Turkish press remains loathe to analyze Russia critically. Given the low level of analysis of Russia's realities (e.g., public health disaster, anti-Turkish nationalism), Turks' awe at Russia's size, and lack of concern at Putin's move to more authoritarian governance, the "Eurasia" alternative remains a preferred alternative for anti-Western nationalist-autarkists on left and right.

Ukraine -----

22. (C) The GOT, heavily Moscow-centric and with weak analytic capabilities, showed scant interest in the Orange Revolution except to interpret it as another part of a Soros-USG master plan.

NATO/EU -----

23. (C) On NATO/EU cooperation, Tuygan will say the Turks cannot permit Cyprus' (i.e., the Greek Cypriots') participation in these discussions absent the EU steps to ease the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots (TCs), steps the Turks assumed would happen after Turkey supported the Annan plan and helped persuade the TCs to support it as well. Cyprus considerations trump Turkey's parallel interest in promoting NATO-EU cooperation, and without EU taking steps for the TCs the Turks are not willing to break the logjam.

24. (C) The Turks have taken two relatively small steps on this issue: they allowed NATO to give defense planning software (NDPASS) to the EU, and are also allowing NATO's NC3 Agency to provide technical assistance to the EU. But recently an MFA official pleaded with us not to mention this information to Turkish politicians, implying that lower levels in the bureaucracy and the military essentially slid this item past Turkey's leaders.

The Black Sea -----

25. (C) If Tuygan raises Black Sea security, he will note that the Turks are committed to increasing their naval engagement and cooperation with other Black Sea littoral nations, but fear a robust NATO or U.S. maritime presence in the Black Sea might anger the Russians and make them pull away from participation in Turkey's Black Sea maritime initiatives, the on-call force of all littoral navies, BLACKSEAFOR, and the counter-trafficking operation, BLACK SEA HARMONY. The Turks have proposed to their BLACKSEAFOR colleagues to multilateralize the Turks, BLACK SEA HARMONY operation, in which Turkey monitors suspicious sea traffic and reports the data to NATO. In Turkey's concept, all the

Black Sea littorals would monitor traffic and report the results to each other as well as the Alliance with little or no involvement of other countries; when all participants are comfortable with cooperative operations, then the operation could be affiliated with NATO.

126. (C) While we need to continue to engage with the Turks to seek a cooperative relationship on the Black Sea, we should be careful about how we seek an enhanced U.S. role (in any event, the Montreux Treaty severely limits the presence of non-littoral military vessels in the Black Sea). Too vigorous a U.S. approach would increase Turkish resistance and confirm for many Turks, including the military, their belief that we are anxious to amend or scrap altogether the Montreux Convention. We should encourage their efforts to work with the other littorals while reminding them that, for NATO's sake, we have an interest in what they are doing and would appreciate being able to observe BLACKSEAFOR exercises or BLACK SEA HARMONY operations.

Middle East -----

127. (C) Turkey is a partner in the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative. Turkey, Italy and Yemen co-sponsor the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD); the Turks will host the first substantive DAD meeting, focusing on women's issues, in Istanbul this June.

128. (C) PM Gul visited Israel and the Palestinian territories in January. PM Erdogan plans to go May 1-3; the Israelis hoped for an Erdogan visit early this year and now view a May visit as too late to be of political significance. At the same time the Israelis are deftly playing on GOT sentiments by being the first to announce support for Turkey's bid for a UNSC seat for 2009-2010. The Turks fancy themselves possible mediators between Israelis and Palestinians but lack the influence with either party to exercise that role. Turkey could play a more useful role in Palestinian reconstruction or facilitating people-to-people contact.

129. (C) The Turks have been unhelpful on Syria. Their support for UNSCR 1559 was tardy, weak and grudging. The GOT views Assad as a would-be reformer who needs to be supported against old-guard Syrian Ba'athists; FM Gul has publicly stated as much. The MFA worries that Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon or regime change in Damascus will threaten "stability." Tuygan's visit comes on the heels of the visit President Sezer is paying to Damascus despite our urging a postponement. Tuygan will depict the visit as merely a return of Assad's 2004 visit to Turkey and will assure us Sezer privately raised Lebanon, Syrian support for terrorism and other topics of interest to the USG. Whatever Sezer says in private, the Turks have done little to dispel the public perception of support for Assad and his policies, and the Sezer visit will have given Assad the impression that he is not isolated.

Afghanistan: Looking Beyond ISAF VII -----

130. (S) Turkey's current efforts for Afghanistan have been valuable: leading ISAF VII; permitting use of Incirlik AB for tanker aircraft, cargo and detainee movement and the transit of Italian equipment for the PRT in Herat; \$10 million in development assistance. The Turks need to look beyond August (when the Turks give up command of ISAF VII) at what they can contribute to Afghanistan's long-term stability. The obvious answer would be Turkish leadership of a PRT, but the Turks have been reluctant to do this outside of certain areas they prefer and with which they are already experienced (i.e., certain areas in the north). To be fair, the Turks got mixed signals from the Alliance and us when they offered to lead a PRT about a year ago. While Tuygan will likely not be enthusiastic about the PRT idea, some in Congress and elsewhere may again question the Turks, commitment to Afghanistan if they do not have a plan for how to contribute following their handover of ISAF command to the Italians.

Economic Partnership Commission -----

131. (C) The MFA Under Secretary traditionally co-chairs meetings of the Economic Partnership Commission (EPC) with E. The last meeting, in December 2003, resulted in a list of recommendations on trade and investment disputes, which have only been partially followed up on the Turkish side. A structural problem with the EPC is that the Turkish MFA does not have economic policy responsibilities congruent with those of the State Department. The MFA is interested in pursuing the arrangement and is developing agenda proposals for a next meeting, which they would host in Ankara. We should continue high-level contacts and address issues of interest to our business communities in expanding bilateral trade and investment, as well as potential U.S.-Turkish

economic cooperation in third countries, such as the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and the Middle East (excluding Iran and Syria).

Terrorism Finance

132. (C) In contrast to otherwise good cooperation in the Global War on Terrorism, Turkey's efforts to block terrorist financing have fallen short. Given Turkey's proximity to the Middle East and some domestic sympathy for terrorist objectives, this constitutes a worrisome weak link in the global financial system. Progress in improving its weak legal regime and enforcement capability has been glacial. Although the MFA does not have direct responsibility, it is an advocate of greater international cooperation and compliance with international agreements (the UN's Counter Terrorism Committee, for example, has identified deficiencies in the legal treatment of terrorism finance) and the Financial Action Task Force recommendations. Ankara needs a strong, clear message of the importance we put on a functional anti-terror finance regime that can make Turkey a full partner with us and Europe.

Trade

133. (C) We have serious problems in our bilateral trade relationship. The research-based pharmaceutical industry is deeply concerned about inadequate protection for confidential testing data, and a quota system for rice and

SIPDIS

corn imports discriminates against U.S. and other foreign producers. The Ambassador and senior Washington officials have raised both issues repeatedly at the highest levels in Turkey, and U.S. delegates have questioned the quota system at WTO meetings in Geneva. We have not succeeded, however, in getting the Turkish government to understand the gravity of the situation. Their refusal to discuss the issues (the Turks have not responded to repeated USTR request to schedule a meeting of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Council) could leave the U.S. with no alternative to invoking bilateral trade measures, such as limiting GSP privileges (which were worth nearly \$1 billion to Turkish exporters last year) and/or going to the WTO's dispute resolution mechanisms. Our bilateral relationship does not need these additional irritants; Turkey should work with us to resolve problems.

Trafficking in Persons

134. (U) Turkey is a transit and destination country for women and children trafficked primarily for sexual exploitation. Most victims come from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The GOT still does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking.

135. (U) However, Turkey's recent efforts are expected to move it from the Tier 2 Watch List to Tier 2 in 2005: Turkish authorities stepped up training of law enforcement personnel to increase victim identification and end automatic deportation; increased punishments for trafficking; signed an anti-trafficking MOU with Belarus; implemented a protocol for victim referrals with an NGO shelter; and distributed anti-trafficking brochures. We should not inform Tuygan that Turkey is expected to move up to Tier 2 since the decision is not final. However, it would be useful to impress on him that the anti-TIP effort remains a top USG (and EU) priority and that we will continue to monitor and seek to work closely with Turkey to help strengthen the Turkish effort.

EDELMAN